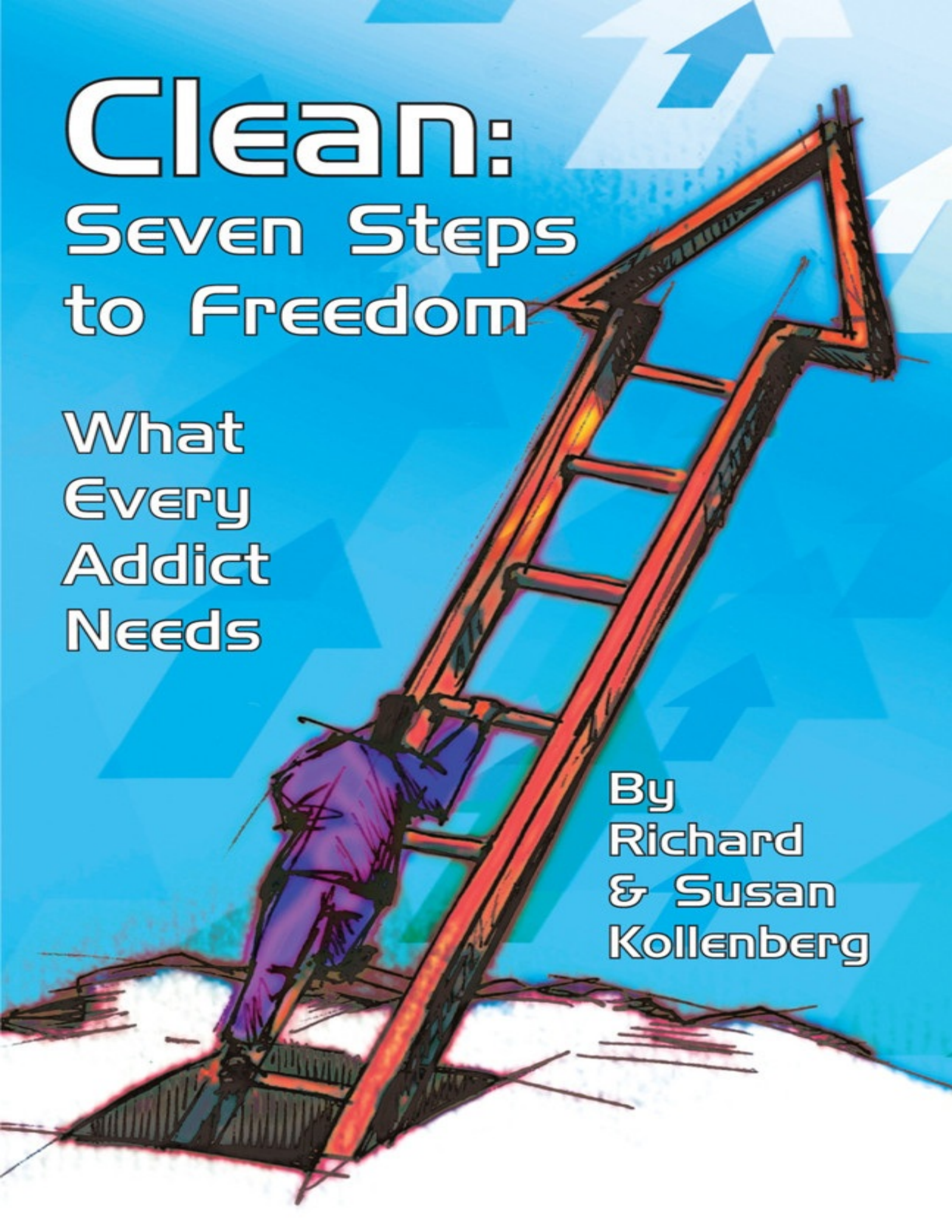


# Clean: Seven Steps to Freedom

What  
Every  
Addict  
Needs

By  
Richard  
& Susan  
Kollenberg



# **CLEAN: Seven Steps to Freedom**

## **What Every Addict Needs**

**By Richard & Susan Kollenberg**

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## PREFACE

**I**t was not God's plan for you to become an addict. God would never choose to place a single soul of His creation into a life of dependency on alcohol and drugs. God is not to blame—He loves you too much to think that this is what He wants for your destiny. No, something else entirely is going on that explains why you are where you are.

The reasons for addiction go far beyond a casual glimpse at an addict. A violent war between good and evil is being waged right now, and it's far beyond the imagination to comprehend on our own. But with careful study, we can connect this war with the problem you face today, and ultimately find a way out for you.

Our addiction story begins when God created Lucifer, a perfect angel of light. He was a glorious and beautiful being. But Lucifer, by his own choice, created Satan. "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground which didst weaken the nations!" (Isaiah 14:12). God did not create Satan; instead, Lucifer willingly became the devil.

But from the very beginning, God has desired love from all His created beings. Yet in order for Him to receive real, meaningful love from them, they must have the freedom and the ability to choose to return that love; otherwise, it wouldn't be love at all. Instead, God would be left with a bunch of robots running around doing what He commands of them. They would serve Him because they were programmed to do just that, and not because they love Him.

With this same freedom to choose, Lucifer preferred to rebel against God and do things his own way. He made that choice in the presence of God and the holy angels, with a full understanding of the consequences. He is now condemned to death, and as a result of his continued, constant war, a rebellion that has gone so far that there are now no redeemable qualities left in him, his fate is utterly sealed.

But yours isn't. You have a way out, even though you are rebelling against God's incredible plans for your life.

You see, right now, Satan's ambition is simply to hurt God as much as possible by dragging humanity down with him to his eternal fate. That includes you, and the rest of us. However, we don't have to die this "second death," the eternal punishment the Bible talks about, that Satan will face.

We can choose to serve God with all our hearts and escape the temptations of the devil by close, conscious, loving contact with God. This is how you can find a way out from your situation, mired in the horror of alcohol and drug addiction.

This is how you can become CLEAN.

**CLEAN:**  
**What Every Addict Needs.**

# CLEAN Steps—AA

## *Step #1—Acknowledge and Admit.*

“For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost “ —Luke  
19:10

### **AA—Acknowledge and Admit:**

*I am lost, helpless, and hopeless.*

**T***he first step in correcting the things wrong in my life is simply realizing that something is wrong. I acknowledge this and admit I have made some poor choices in my life. This doesn't mean that I'm here to dwell on why I made those choices, but I need to acknowledge my responsibility in making them and admit they were wrong decisions.*

*The fact that I have made mistakes in my life doesn't mean that my life itself is a mistake.*

Everyone makes mistakes... that's what makes life so difficult. But by being able to admit when we have a problem, we are well on our way to true freedom.

However, we must be careful: Our addiction isn't just a “weakness,” or something we just need a little help with—these beliefs are simply not true. The choices we've been making in our lives have been actions controlled entirely by our addictions.

Therefore, we must admit that we're not in control of our lives; something else is in control. This is what it means to be powerless. Powerless people don't have any choice but to let their addiction, or other people, make their choices for them.

*When I am no longer running my own life, something else is running it and making my decisions for me. It means that my addiction is stronger than I am, and it is forcing its demands on me.*

No matter what it is—drugs, sex, money, gambling, alcohol—we must admit that we are powerless over it. Acknowledgment and admission is confession, and this is where we have to begin “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23).

These are the questions that we must ask ourselves: Are we ready to be completely and totally honest about our behavior? To what extent have the results of our decisions caused harm to others and to us? Are we ready to search with an open heart for the answer to our dilemma? Are we really serious about

walking away from a life of selfish short-term pleasure and long-term destruction? Are we finally tired of hurting other people? Are we truly tired of having our power of choice taken away from us by our addictions? Do we want to close this chapter of our lives and turn the corner to a new beginning, a life filled with peace, love, joy, and hope?

Are my life and the lives of those around me worth it? Do I want to live?

*I choose daily to be totally honest with myself about my life and my condition.*



## CLEAN Steps—BB

### Step #2—Begin to Believe

“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him “ —  
Hebrews 11:6

#### **BB—Begin to Believe:**

*I can't... He can.*

***H**aving admitted that my way hasn't worked in the past and will not work in the future, I must begin to believe that another way, a better way, to find true happiness is available to me.*

Beginning to believe starts a whole new way of thinking; it is a process. Remember, for a long time, we addicts actually believed “our way” was working. But now we understand that we are powerless and are in need of help. We believed in ourselves, but we failed. Now what? Is there a power outside myself that is greater than me... a power that loves me unconditionally, even when I can't love myself?

Absolutely! He is called God. He is the Creator of the universe, and thus, He knows our every need. He should, because He designed us.

God wants to recreate us in His own image—according to His plan. However, if we think we can somehow help ourselves, we'll actually stand in His way. We need to think of Him and Him alone as our solution.

So how do we know that God exists? What are the evidences of Him? *How can I know He is real, and thus believe He has a way out for me?* God has many ways to make Himself known to us and bring us into communion with Him. For instance, nature's complexity and order speak to His presence.

A heart open to His love and glory will easily see the works of His hands in our world. We can hear and understand the communications of God through the things of nature—green fields, towering trees, budding flowers, falling rain, a babbling brook, and even a passing cloud reveals the power of a Creator. Through His creation, He speaks to our hearts and invites us to become acquainted with the One who made them all.

God's ways are different than ours. His works are based on pure faith, while we tend to base our faith on what we see or know. In other words, we say, “Let me

see it, and I'll believe it." But God says, "Believe it, and I'll let you see it." With this in mind, we understand that God will restore our lives His way, which most likely won't be the same as our way "And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst" (John 6:35).

Remember, our way kept us in our addiction, but God wants to restore our lives back to sanity "For I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee" (Isaiah 41:13).

*I must begin to believe that this is the only way out of my dilemma. I must remember that I have been created with freedom of choice and I can now choose each day to believe in God.* "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name" (John 1:12).

# CLEAN Steps—CC

## *Step #3—Complete Control*

“That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God  
“ — 1 Corinthians 2:5

### **CC—Complete Control:**

*He leads... not me. It is now His battle, not mine!*

**N**ow that I have begun to believe in God, I must put that belief into action. I must now trust God with my every decision. This will require some new habits and serious effort on my part, but I am willing to do so, because my life depends on it.

*Turning my life over to the care of God is a choice I will make every day and quite possibly minute by minute. With this step begins new actions of prayer and devotions that will soon become welcome habits, that will lead me to hear and understand the voice of God, and to experience the wonderful things He has in store for me.*

Here is His promise: “Ye shall seek me, and find me when ye shall search for me with all your heart.” The whole heart must be given to God. This means a complete transformation, a renewing of our nature; we must give ourselves completely to Him.

Surrendering all to the will of God requires a struggle, but we must submit to God before we can be transformed. He yearns for us to give ourselves to Him. He is eager to work His will in us, but we must choose whether or not we will be set free from the bondage of addiction and sin.

To do this, we must give up anything that would separate us from Him. *Whatever will pull me away from God should be thrown out of my life.* Whether it is the love of money, the love of a life of selfish ease, the love of freedom from responsibility—it makes no difference; it must go. We also can’t be half God’s and half the world’s. There are only two sides.

In this life, if we aren’t completely on God’s side, then we are on Satan’s side. It’s a tough saying, but a war is raging between God and the devil. As addicts, we were as generals in Satan’s army, but now we have chosen the other side... we’ve defected, and our lives depend on modeling our leader, Jesus Christ, to be a soldier in His army.

But in order to be in God’s army, we must remember one thing: God fights our

battles for us! “For the battle is not yours, but God’s” (2 Chronicles 20:15). *I must stop fighting and surrender my will to God and let Him fight my battles for me.* God always has our well being in mind He also doesn’t ask us to give up anything that would be in our best interest to keep, and He knows that the path of addiction is a desolate and lonely path filled with misery and destruction God does not wish to see His children suffer; it does not please Him He wants to put you on a path full of joy.

*How do I surrender myself to God? All the promises I’ve made about my addiction to others and myself have all failed.* Right now, we desire to give ourselves to Him, but we are weak in moral power, slaves to doubt, and we are controlled by the habits of a life of sins. Our promises and resolutions are more like ropes of sand, and we cannot control our thoughts, our impulses, or our affections.

Even more, because we know all about our broken promises to quit or do better in the past, we already have little confidence in our own sincerity We feel like God will not accept us, because we are so untrustworthy. *But I will not despair. God has given me a will, and I will exercise that will with His power.*

We must understand the true force of the will—the governing power of the mind in every person, the power of choice Everything depends on our right action of the will. This power to decide, it is a power God has given to us, and it is ours to exercise that freedom. “My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways” (Proverbs 23:26).

Yet we cannot change our hearts, and we cannot of our own power make our desires to be as God’s desires But I can choose to serve Him. We can give Him our wills; He will then work in us to will and to do according to His good pleasure Thus our whole natures will be brought under the control of the spirit of Christ; our desires will be centered on Him, our thoughts will be in harmony with Him.

*I realize this won’t be easy and that results might not be immediate; nevertheless, this is my decision. I choose life over death!* “Let me live that I may praise you, and may your laws sustain me. I have strayed like a lost sheep. Seek your servant, for I have not forgotten your commands” (Psalms 119:175, 176).

# CLEAN Steps—DD

## *Step #4—Different Direction*

“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” —2 Corinthians 5:17

### **DD—Different Direction:**

*His way is the other way.*

*Not only am I in a different vehicle with a different driver, but I am on a different road going in a different direction with different people.*

This step is crucial. Now that we have allowed God’s influence to enter our lives, we cannot allow other influences alter the direction that God has mapped out for us. This means that we absolutely must change the places we play and get new playmates.

This also will require a tremendous effort. We addicts can’t fix our friends’ lives either; that is a matter about which they themselves must approach God. *I must now choose to associate myself with Christ and allow His Spirit to work on my heart.*

We can’t see or hear the working of the spirit of God, but the results in our lives will become evident. Our lives will bear witness to the fact that the Spirit of God is at work renewing our hearts. We and others will find changes in our characters, our ambitions, and our habits. They will see a distinct contrast from who we were to who we are today.

Remember, we are not to trust in ourselves or in our own good works to earn favor with God; rather, it is God’s Spirit that dwells in us that is a fountain of goodness. Our different direction and our association with Christ happen daily. Our thoughts are with Him, and our lives are consecrated to Him, longing to bear His kind, loving image. The fruits of the spirit will be brought forth in our characters. These fruits are wonderful traits that will bless others—“love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, faith, meekness, temperance” (Galatians 5:22, 23).

Again, this new direction is simple, but it’s not easy. We will have many thoughts of the old life, and people from the past will pull and tear at us to influence our decisions back to the old, selfish ways. *But with the Spirit of God working in my life, I can choose each day to serve Him.* “But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image

from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord” (2 Corinthians 3:18).

This different direction also brings us to a “fork in the road” about what we are putting into our bodies. The things that we used to consume must be replaced by things that are healthy and fulfilling. “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which ye are” (1 Corinthians 3:16, 17). Thinking of our bodies as the dwelling place of God is a new way of thinking, but we can choose to give the Holy Spirit a welcome home with a clean diet and plenty of water and exercise.

*I understand that the direction I am now heading is a direction totally opposite of the one my old friends and I were traveling. I have a choice every day with whom I will associate, and a full understanding of the importance of that choice. “The mocker seeks wisdom and finds none, but knowledge comes easily to the discerning” (Proverbs 14:7).*

# CLEAN Steps—EE

## *Step #5—Erase Errors*

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life “ —John 3:16

### **EE—Erase Errors:**

*Everyone makes mistakes, but God wants to erase them.*

***I**t is now time for me to deal with those mistakes and bad choices I have made in the past. I have clearly wronged others, and I owe it to myself, to God, and to them to right those wrongs wherever possible. This task calls for me to be as open and honest as I can about my part in my dealings with others.*

We must take an exhaustive inventory of our consciences and let God present to us our wrongs, and then we are to right those wrongs. However, we must proceed only in those cases where it will not cause harm to another or ourselves.

Remember, this does not happen all at once; rather, it is a careful, continuous, ongoing step as is all the seven step-by-step process. We know we have hurt others by our behavior. Assuming responsibility for our past offense will dissolve the guilt and pain that we carry around from that behavior, and ultimately it will free us from those thoughts that want to pull us back into our addictions.

This inventory is a search of the heart. It is not a “blame game” to condemn others or ourselves simply to justify the behavior. Our actions up to this point in our lives have been unacceptable, and we must now diagnose the results and face the consequences head on. We must repeatedly ask God to search our hearts, and create in us new hearts that desire never to hurt others or ourselves with a return to the past.

It is also absolutely vital that you never forget this very important fact: Even though we have done some or even many bad things, this does not make us or our lives of any less value to God. “For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23).

Our true sense of self worth comes when we understand that we were bought at a price that is enough to cover all eternity. Christ paid that infinite price for us with His life, so that we might be claimed as one of His and thus set free from the bondage of our bad behavior. Just knowing that someone loves and cares for us enough to die for us illustrates to us that we are in fact valuable.

What is our worth? Since we were bought with an infinite price, then our value

must likewise be infinite God has purchased us, and God doesn't buy junk! Yet we are that valuable only because God has placed that value on us and not by any doing of our own Remember, we must recognize that God alone can save us, because our own doing is what took us into a life of addiction.

It is now time to examine that behavior in detail, recognize it for what it is and turn from it Once again, in and of ourselves we can do nothing; we can't even succeed at this step unless God's Spirit is working in us to make it succeed So we must seek God in prayer and ask Him to present to us our shortcomings, and give us the strength to ask forgiveness from God, from those whom we have wronged, and to take the steps necessary to right those wrongs wherever possible.

*This constant application of the principles of this step to my life will keep me heading in the right direction. So I choose to walk in the direction that God wants me to go in.*



## CLEAN Steps—FF

### *Step #6—Forever Forgiven*

“If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” —1 John 1:9

#### **FF—Forever Forgiven:**

*He has already forgiven me, now I must forgive myself and others.*

**A**s I learn more about the character of God—that He is a kind, loving, forgiving God—I begin to understand the importance and power of forgiveness. As I confess my own wretched shortcomings and accept God’s forgiveness, it is bringing about a change in my life so that the security and joy of knowing that I am forgiven enables me to gain the mindset, power, and desire to forgive others.

We can fail in this step in just one way: by failing to accept God’s forgiveness. For it is by accepting His forgiveness that we are given the power to forgive others. But this is far from being self-serving; instead, we also come to an understanding of what forgiveness is really all about.

Real forgiveness means that God will never hold our past behavior against us. He has forgotten it. Indeed, the only way it could ever surface again is by our choosing to return to it. This is true forgiveness, and this is the forgiveness that we can now humbly share with others. *As I am forgiven, I can now forgive others.*

We as addicts have been takers all of our lives. We took everything we needed to satisfy our addiction, including precious time away from our friends and loved ones. If we look at the nature around us, we will notice a different principle in action. Everything gives. The trees, for instance, give the world shade and oxygen, as well as fruit to eat and a home for the birds. The mountain streams also participate in this “cycle of benevolence,” providing valleys fresh water, giving salmon a place to spawn, and offering the bear a fountain from which to drink.

However, we are born with a tendency to serve self, which upsets this cycle. It is God’s desire to change our old selfish natures into new, kind, giving, and loving natures. Our part is that we choose to allow Him to do this by accepting His forgiveness. Then, in turn, step by step, we forgive others.

The power in forgiveness comes from a true grasp of the concept of forgiveness. Its root is in unconditional love. Coming to the realization that we are loved by God unconditionally, our hearts are opened up to a whole new way

of thinking and living It is a way that leads us to put God first in our lives, which in turn compels us to desire His plan for our lives.

*I will seek the Lord in everything I do for He longs to be my Friend.* “For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you” (Matthew 6:14).

# CLEAN Steps—GG

## Step #7—God's Grace

“Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need “ —Hebrews 4:16

### GG—God's Grace:

*Keep giving what I have received... and let the light shine through me.*

***I**t is God's grace and God's grace alone that keeps me separated from my addiction. I have no power in and of myself to overcome any evil influences It is only by the grace of God that I live to see each new glorious day removed from my addiction.*

As we ponder God's grace on a day-to-day basis, we come to a better understanding of how to treat others. We understand now that it is not about us anymore. It is about others. We must “die” to our selfish desires and begin to think more earnestly of the welfare of those around us. *As I grow in God's selfless abundant grace, I will see that giving to others is a far greater joy than anything I've known before.*

It is by blessing others that we are blessed. We are now living, walking testimonies of God's grace. “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast” (Ephesians 2:8, 9). No one can argue with our testimonies and how God has worked in our lives. Our testimonies of deliverance become stronger and stronger as the Lord carries us through the trials to come and gives us the victory after victory over temptation.

Grace is one of the most misunderstood words in the Bible. Being under God's grace really means that we have been given another chance to live. Our lives are then molded into harmony with the principles found in the Bible. To do and live otherwise, as we have been through our addictions, frustrates God's grace and causes us to misrepresent Him to those around us Freed from the bondage of our past, we are now ambassadors for God, sent by His Son to proclaim what His grace and mercy have done in our lives.

Being a witness to God's grace, of His power over our addictions, and dying to self are ultimately manifested in the things we do, our actions We are not to sit in judgment of another's relationship with God, and we are not to condemn them for their actions, because it is only by God's grace that there is change going on

in our lives “He who despises his neighbor sins, but blessed is he who is kind to the needy” (Proverbs 14:21).

Always remembering and holding on to these concepts allows us to be compassionate and understanding with others and their problems, and it gives us the motive and desire to help them. Reflecting on how good God has been to us in our lives, in spite of our poor decisions in the past, can help us relate to the problems that others are having. By God’s grace, we can share these steps with them and watch God transform their lives too.

*I must see my life with a new purpose and with new priorities only by the grace of God.* “My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness” (2 Corinthians 12:9).



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